Andover Dec 27th 1827

At the close of another day I sit down to write you a hasty letter. I received your last with much pleasure but had some of it been a little more definite my pleasure would have been greater - (It is now just 9 oclock

You say "you can suffer any affliction for the sake of Christ" and again, that you hope and pray that ~~G~~ our father in heaven will receive and own ~~me~~ you as his orphan child I do give myself up to him &c". And then afterwards you say "I feel very different here at home from what I ever did before I looked" - you omitted some word that I suppose you meant to insert after "looked". What it was I cannot tell but from the connection should suppose that you meant to say, "before looked to Christ". In consequence of this I am left in doubt whether you meant by these expressions any thing more than what a heart wounded by affliction would lead you to say or whether you meant that you indulged a hope that you had experienced such a change in your feelings and desires as would lead you in the spirit of the christian to bow beneath the rod, feeling that christ was indeed your saviour, and God indeed your ~~friend~~ father - In one word I did not know whether they were only expressions arising from grief or whether you meant me to understand that you had become a Christian. Please be so good in your next as to tell me explicitly whether you hope you have met with such a change or not. And if you have what are some of your views and feelings. Could I witness you coming out from the world & devoting yourself to God in an everlasting covenant how would my heart rejoice - Could I hear that you intended joining the church in consequence of a change of heart I would with joy come to Berwick at the time that I might sit down at the table of our common saviour with you.

I have thus given you my opinion. as I cannot be acquainted fully with your situation ~~[illegible]~~ it would not be strange that I should err in this opinion. I must therefore leave you to act for yourself assuring you that you have my warmest prayers for your present and future happiness. I cannot tell when I shall see you but I shall improve the first leisure time we have

I am much occupied now in writing and in Hebrew - rise at 6 and retire at 11 - Thus devoting 17 long hours to study exercise & the various duties of the day. I am much pleased with my situation. Have become something of a cabinet maker - I have commenced making some toilet tables, in the shop - they will undoubtedly be splendid when they are done.

Dec. 27th 1827 -

When I asked you, if you wished my advice you probably misunderstood me - I shall explain myself in the sequel. You say you receive my advice as "incense". I dont mean ever to criticise, permit me however to say, that we speak of offering incense to God never to man: of course God receives incense. Or in a more general manner we often speak of offering incense to any object of worship: of course the being worshipped receives incense. By saying then that you receive what comes from me as incense is saying that I worship you as a being worthy of religious homage; which I suppose is not what you meant - Now though I love you dearly I shouldnt like to be caught offering incense to you very much. You see I must jest a little now and then. Thus much for criticism.

Permit me now dear S. to say something to you respecting your present situation and in doing this I explain what I meant by asking you if you wished for my advice.

What I may communicate to you now I trust you will keep sacredly secret. When I was in B— you had some one who could freely tell you every report that happened to be in circulation now the case is somewhat different - Mr Weeks may tell you some general things ~~to~~ but he will not come to you, nor can you expect it, and tell you those reports which immediately & personally concern you - When I was there he could tell me and I, you. Now he can tell me by letter and may I not also tell you by letter, and in this way make up in some manner my absence However did he know that I told you I fear that he would cease to communicate it to me. Berwick you know is a newsy place and the various events that have happened in your family the past summer have been such as to keep the newsmongers constantly at work - I intend to say nothing that ~~a~~ will widen the breach between you and Edmund - Would to God that I could heal it: Nor do I wish you to pay too much regard to public opinion - Let public opinion ~~be~~ set which way it will if I am conscious of the correctness and purity of my conduct and motives I heed it not nor would I wish you to heed it. But if there are reports abroad which in any degree affect you I trust you will feel that I am acting the part of a real friend in telling you of them and ~~I know that~~ if every action of yours from some means or other

I have now told you all that Weeks has told me. I trust you will receive it kindly and that you will not lisp a word of it to Weeks. I cannot advise you as I could were I exactly acquainted with your situation. But I have seen my fathers estate settled and there was vexation enough attending it. And you may be sure there will be in your fathers. If consistent with your [illegible] circumstances [illegible]

Remember me to Mrs Roberts if she knows of our correspondence. If she does not why then you need not do it. And be sure you keep this letter where no mortal eye shall ever rest upon it. If you can decypher all I have written I shall be glad. Write me soon and give me a long letter.

With these few lines I subscribe myself

Your real friend and lover

A. Phelps

is made known publicly you ought to know it that you may be on your guard. The best have faults and when tale bearers surround them they have need of no small degree of vigilance. ~~Mr~~ You are by this time prepared to read what follows - Mr Weeks says that when he first returned from his visit he was repeatedly obliged to hear of the difficulty between Edmund and you about the chamber and also of your treatment to Mr Ferguson when he called to see your father on some business. Weeks did not tell me what the report concerning your ~~[illegible]~~ treatment to Mr Ferguson was & I suppose the reason was he did not believe it true and therefore thought it useless to waste time and paper in communicating it to me. Please in your next to tell me if there was cause for any report of any kind. Now I do not mention these things to you because I care a straw for them one way or the other, but simply that you may be on your guard. One thing I am certain of these reports did not come from you, nor Weeks nor me. ~~Who~~ From whom then did they come? Who is it that trumpets these things abroad? who is it that spreads out the domestic concerns of a family ~~&~~ the petty differences of the members of that family to public view? There is some Achan in the camp. Who is the man? Weeks says these things are mentioned and attributed [illegible] as the cause & that those who ~~speak~~ mention them to him [illegible] at you have a malicious temper & that you [illegible] or by Mrs [illegible]berts have been the cause of all the disturbance in the family. I need not here tell you that those who know you well, know this to be false. But still such reports are in circulation and feeling that I am the nearest friend you have on earth I feel it a duty to tell you of them. It seems then somebody tells these tales out of school and gives them a false ~~coloring~~ colouring. I suspect it will ~~not take~~ you long to determine who it is. One thing more - Mr B. in one of his pouty fits says (~~I suppose because they are sour grapes~~) "I wouldn't have a wife that has the ~~hystericks~~ hysterics." You and I know the reason why he wouldn't. Now I have also another object in view besides simply telling you these reports. It is this. In the settlement of your fathers estate there will undoubtedly be many things ~~oc~~ occurring that will be very unpleasant to you. There must necessarily be many things to try you severely - you have some interest at stake - Edmund has some - ~~Mr~~ Mrs Roberts some - Mr Palmer some - there will them situated as you are in respect to each other be some things extremely unpleasant. And the same tongue that has already slandered you will continue to do it. Now if you remain in B. your share of the property will be no better secured than if you were absent. I advise you then by all means to go to Dover and remain until the estate is settled unless ~~you~~ Edmund will consent to live with you as a brother should do. Should you go to Dover you ~~can be~~ will be away from the sight and the tongues of those busy bodies in other men's matters of which Berwick has its share.

I have now told you all that Weeks has told me. I trust you will receive it kindly and that you will not lisp a word of it to Weeks. I cannot advise you as I could were I exactly acquainted with your situation. But I have seen my fathers estate settled and there was vexation enough attending it. And you may be sure there will be in your fathers. If consistent with your circumstances then I do most sincerely advise you to have nothing to do with it, but leave your concerns in the hands of Isaac or Mr Hayes perhaps and go yourself to Dover. I am sure you will find it for your own happiness and so far as property is concern[illegible] I have no doubt your situation will be equally good. There [illegible] no good reason that I know of why you should [illegible]in in Berwick. If there is be so good as to tell me in your next and if there is not - knowing that you have enemies around you who report what is false concerning you I think you cannot but see that it is best for you to remove from them.

I have thus given you my opinion. as I cannot be [illegible]

Decr. 27th 1827 —
A A P to J. A. H —

ANDR. Ms.
DEC 29

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Mr William P. Weeks Esqr
South Berwick
Maine